

The  
Hartford  
Catholic  
Worker



St. Martin De Porres House  
St. Brigid House

"Fear is useless, you need to trust and believe..." - *Jesus*



*Truly, I say to  
you,  
Before Abraham  
was,  
I am.*

*John 8:58-59*

*Veronica's Veil, Brian Kavanagh*

Lent/Easter 2012

# The Hartford Catholic Worker

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The Hartford Catholic Worker is published bimonthly by the St. Martin De Porres Catholic Worker community. We are a lay community of Catholics and like minded friends, living in the north end of Hartford, working and praying for an end to violence and poverty. We are a 501c3 tax exempt organization. We do not seek or accept state or federal funding. Our ability to house the homeless, feed the hungry, and work with the children depends on contributions from our readers. We can be reached at: 18 Clark St., Hartford CT 06120; (860) 724-7066, doucot@sbcglobal.net and www.hartfordcatholicworker.org We are: Brian Kavanagh, Kirstie Dodd, Jacqueline, Christopher, Micah and Ammon Allen-Doucot.

## "Lazarus, Come Forth"

An Evening Reflection with John Dear, S.J.

Thursday, May 10: 7-9PM

St. Patrick and St. Anthony Church  
Franciscan Center for Urban Ministry  
285 Church St., Hartford

Tickets: \$10 in advance, \$12 at the door

Call: 860-756-4064, or 860-888-2502

Father John Dear, S.J. is an internationally recognized voice for peace and former director of the Fellowship of Reconciliation. In 2008, Archbishop Desmond Tutu nominated John Dear for the Nobel Peace Prize.

Free, well-lit parking is available in the Saints Surface Parking Lot across from the Urban Center.

## No War on Iran

On Thursday, April 12, 3:00

Stephen Kinzer will speak on Iran in the Marcus White Living Room of Central CT State U. Mr. Kinzer offers a fresh, informed and articulate, alternative to the bellicose rantings of Washington. His recent books: *All the Shah's Men*, *Overthrown*, and *Reset* provide helpful insight and critical context to our foreign policy in the Middle East.

The presentation is free and open to the public. For more info go to <http://www.justforeignpolicy.org/iran/stephen.html>

"The greatest challenge of the day is: how to bring about a revolution of the heart, a revolution which has to start with each one of us?"

"Those who cannot see Christ in the poor are atheists indeed." Dorothy Day



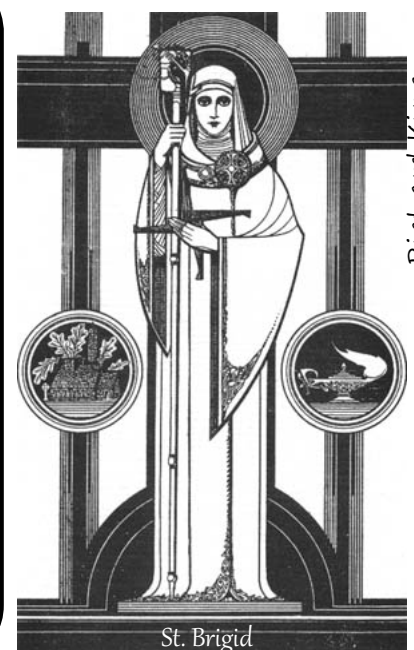
## Please Join us for our 2nd annual Fundraiser Italian Night and Silent Auction

Saturday April 28, 2012 6 – 10 p.m.  
St James Episcopal Church  
1018 Farmington Ave. West Hartford

\$15 per person - \$50 for a family of 4 or more  
Pasta Dinner, Dessert, Beverages – Live Music

Wine and Beer Available

For more information or to help, contact Sr. Elaine Betoncourt at [sebcsj@hotmail.com](mailto:sebcsj@hotmail.com)



# There is a Green House on Clark Street

Jacqueline Allen-Doucot

The Green House is a “program” of the Hartford Catholic Worker Community. In this community children and adults come together and share resources, skills, creativity, healthy food, interests, knowledge, and experiences.



Sometimes the adults teach the kids and sometimes the kids teach the adults. Sometimes folks come because they have a need. Sometimes folks come because they have something to share. Sometimes the ones who have something to share

need the most. Sometimes the ones who appear to have very little actually have and give the most.

People from different races, classes, countries, genders and sexual persuasions share and work together to help each other become more complete human beings. We learn from each other that the Human family is diverse and that each of us has a gift to share as well as some hurt and baggage we carry around as a result of our human brokenness.

At The Green House we try to build up the good we see in each other and gently tear away at the things that keep us separated from each other- *and therefore from God who dwells in each of us.* While this is going on we discover that the Holy Spirit is at work in and around all of us...and we see poverty, apartheid, violence, abuse, sexism, and all the ugly things that come from lack of love and community begin to shrink. We see Love and it's power to heal



growing constantly.

It is the miracle of the loaves and fishes. It is wine with The Beloved in the desert of our individualism. It is the body of Christ, complete with the armpit! It is noisy and messy and every time the doorbell rings you had better remember to be kind...because it is Jesus standing there when you open it. And Jesus has been through hell, so he understands that you may have been muttering under your breath “*who the hell is it now*” even as you moved towards the door.

It is a place that makes you understand that Jesus told the apostles to live in community because he knew that doing so would take up every ounce of “boss” energy they had...and no one would have the energy to rule over, or make war with, anyone else.

It is where angels and devils play on the same team and God has the ref.'s whistle. Where Mother Mary is right ...*the lowly are exalted, Souls are magnified... and the hungry are filled with good things.*

And that, my friend, is the Hartford Catholic Worker!!Ω

*(Jackie wrote this piece for Keyanna who needed an explanation of the Green House for a school project.)*



# On the Undead and the Everliving

Christopher J. Doucot

Early Thanksgiving eve Jackie and I were joined on the couch by our dear friend Morliana. Pooped, Jackie and I from the turkey rush and Mo from the child growing in her womb, we three plopped our feet on the coffee table. When Mo's pant legs rode up a bit we were shocked by how swollen her legs were. Shortly after leaving us her doctor called her and told her to head immediately to the hospital. Two day later, and seven weeks early, a precious new person entered the world with the birth of Dahmianna Lilly Dullaire. Two weeks later baby Lilly was discharged to our care while Mo remained behind as the doctor's tried to figure out what ailed her. Since then Lilly has mostly lived with us, occasionally joined by her precocious three year old sister Desteni-Rose, while their mom received treatment for Lupus and blood clots in her lungs. During the seven weeks between her birth and due date Jackie, her Godmother, held her tight nearly all day and night.

A few weeks prior to Lilly's arrival another "person" near and dear to us was born when the Hartford Catholic Worker became the Hartford Catholic Worker, inc. Though our nineteen year labor can hardly be described as premature, it was difficult. And despite an unknowable due date, our birth was clean and anti-climatic; no water broke and no cord was cut, instead a letter was delivered and an envelope torn open. The birth announcement read: "Congratulations! It's a nonprofit!" (not really).

This notion that corporations are "persons" in America predates by at least a century Mitt Romney's August, but not august, response to a heckler that "corporations are people, my friend". But it took the *Citizen's United* decision of the Supreme



Court to get the attention of flesh bearing persons. According to the Supreme Court money is speech and thus restrictions on corporate contributions to political campaigns are an unconstitutional infringement on their First Amendment right to speech. It probably didn't take a Supreme Court decision to know that money talks. Regardless, that decision has seemingly bolstered the fear that multinational corporations with billion dollar portfolios portend Nietzsche's Ubermensch master race. With their immunity to biological death and impunity to the death penalty is it farfetched to worry that we are unawares, yet already, the chattel of these potentially immortal, amoral persons?

A bedrock principle of democracy is *Habeas Corpus*. *Habeas Corpus*, Latin for "you may have the body", was developed in 17<sup>th</sup> century England as a protection against the unlawful seizure of individuals by the state. The framers of the U.S. Constitution sought to protect us against extrajudicial arrest, unlawful imprisonment or open ended sentencing by including this civil right in Article One. Tragically, and despite our self-proclaimed status as leader of the

"free world", the United States has disregarded *Habeas Corpus* by rendering/kidnapping human persons for a decade now; openly discarding them in prisons in Guantanamo, Cuba and Bagram, Afghanistan and who knows where else. This rejection of *Habeas Corpus* for persons with human bodies has been ably assisted by corporations, such as Academi, (formerly Xe, formerly Blackwater) a private "security" firm that made hundreds of millions of dollars in government contracts in Iraq.

Academi isn't the only corporate person profiting off the sinister sorcery of making human persons disappear. In 2010 officials with Corrections Corporation of America, the largest private prison company in America worth a billion dollars, crafted the model bill that became Arizona's harsh anti-immigration law in 2010. Effectively this law fills CCoA prisons with immigrant persons that have been declared illegal aliens. [CCoA profits by a system that strips illegal immigrants of their personhood.](#)

*Habeas Corpus* is being ignored and people are disappearing.

Or are they? Have the souls in Guantanamo really vanished? Did the janitors, maids and farm workers locked up in Arizona actually become aliens? Or have we been tricked by a sadistic sleight of hand? Hoodwinked into accepting this Orwellian understanding of what a person is- and isn't? Perhaps, if we turn the writ of *Habeas Corpus* around we might gain a better perspective and see things for how they really are-like looking out of Alice's rabbit hole instead of into it. What we might see is that attempts to reduce people to the raw materials of the prison and military industrial complexes, aliens or monsters, don't make them disappear, but it does diminish our shared humanity.

And so, if corporations are peo-

# IN THE EVENT OF ZOMBIE ATTACK

## 3 STEPS TO SURVIVING INFESTATION

### 1. Avoidance    2. Termination    3. Disposal

#### 1. AVOIDANCE

All zombie evacuations render the location uninhabitable. The citizen's first duty is to evacuate the area and proceed immediately to an authorized Rescue Station. Daily authorized Z.E.R.O. personnel will manage relocation in the city to an effective evacuation to COMPLETE AVOIDANCE OF HAZARDOUS CONDITIONS while en route.

**EVACUATE**

Gather family and essential travel vehicles only. **DO NOT** attempt to secure or defend property or possessions.

**DO NOT ENGAGE!**

It is critical to remember that any zombies encountered during evacuation are **NOT** family or friends but **REINFORCED CORPSES INFECTED WITH A DEADLY CONTAGION**. Under **NO** circumstances should you engage one in any kind of interaction. Contagion is transmitted via a bite, and **ANY** interaction with a zombie results in repeated attempts to bite.

**IN THE EVENT OF A BITE.**

Apply pressure to the wound with padding found in the supplied **BITE KIT**. **NO** valid medical supervision can be accessed.

**IF THE WOUNDED INDIVIDUAL EXPIRES** after being bitten, **MARK** THE **INCIDENT'S** **IMMEDIATE** or **EVACUATE** guidelines found in red section.

**RELOCATE**

Proceed immediately to the Rescue Station assigned to your area. In the absence of Z.E.R.O. Relocation Management personnel, monitor local radio broadcasts for directions.

#### 2. TERMINATION

Engage this step only if an unprovoked hostile, and **ONLY** if you have positively identified a zombie by using the **Zombie Classification Cards** (supplied). Otherwise, any hostile actions should be referred to a daily authorized member of Z.E.R.O. or your local licensed Zombie Extinctionist.



**GENERAL NEUTRALIZATION**

The **ONLY** known method for effectively terminating a zombie, either by cranial penetration or blunt force trauma (A, B, C) or decapitation (D).

**CENTER MASS**

For stopping or slowing down target **ONLY** when distance does not permit a head shot. **NOT** an effective termination method.

**LOWER EXTREMITIES**

For stopping or slowing down target **ONLY** when distance does not permit a head shot. **NOT** an effective termination method.

#### 3. DISPOSAL



**"TAPE & TAG"**

After terminating the zombie(s), mark the perimeter to enable Z.E.R.O. Disposal Unit personnel to locate the remains and ship to a Mobile Acid Disintegration (M.A.D.) unit for disintegration. This can be completed in two simple "Tape & Tag" steps:

1. Mark area surrounding the remains with an appropriate length of **CAUTION: ZOMBIE BREAK ZONE** tape (supplied).
2. Attach a **FORM 280** tag (supplied) to the toe of the corpse.

**DO NOT INCINERATE!**

Incineration releases airborne toxins which spread infection to the uninfected deceased or in areas of heavy habitation or population, the severity of which is not known. This especially increases infestation levels.

FORM #078-INFO-998033-2A (rev. 11.09.04)

ple, then bring me a body! Can you show me the flesh of AIG? Where are the Lehman Brothers buried? I want to see Freddie Mac's prom photos and know if he was cheating on Fannie Mae.

No body, no person.

You may ask how someone such as myself who is a firm believer in the Mystical Body of Christ could reject the fiction of corporate personhood on the grounds that corporate persons are not composed of any one body but of a formal association of many bodies. Well, the difference is soul. The mythical body of a corporation, the for profit kind at least, ain't got no soul! I've seen enough horror movies to know that a soulless body is nothing *but a zombie out to eat your brain*.

The Mystical Body of Christ is the person of Jesus in the world today because when we gather in his name to feed, shelter, clothe, heal, liberate, forgive or beg forgiveness the bottom line is the well being of the *entire* body. The Mystical Body and its members are motivated by the command to love our neighbors *as ourselves*. This is hardly the ethic of zombie corporations. What would it do to the profit margins and stock prices of Traveler's if CEO Jay Fishman saw to it that the janitors who cleaned his executive bathroom were

paid \$26 million in 2011 as he was? I know, that's crazy and impossible; so what if instead he got their salary? Alright, that's crazy too, I'm sure he has a mortgage; but can't we meet somewhere in the middle? Why must the median salary of an (S&P) [500 company be 438](#) times greater than the median salary of the United States (**\$11.4 million versus \$26 thousand**)?

The Mystical Body is concerned for everyone, the Corporate Body is not. In fact, the legal duty of corporations is to protect the interests of its shareholders. In the wake of October's snow storm I'm sure corporate person Traveler's, (Mr. Traveler?) and his neighbor Mr. Aetna wanted to waive deductibles and not raise premium rates, after all they know budgets are tight these days, but we just gotta understand they can't help everyone. They have a responsibility to their shareholders. The many may have to suffer in order to protect the few, that's just the way it is for a corporation. Thankfully they don't need our pity, being zombies and all they don't have emotions. Mr. Merrill Lynch (who is owned by Bank of America- despite the 13<sup>th</sup> Amendment's prohibi-

tion on owning people) shed no tears when he announced in November that 30,000 human people would be laid off; maybe like Dr. Spock Merrill had a notion that he ought to feel sadness but zombies, like Vulcans, don't cry.

Corporations simply aren't people; not even our corporation, the Hartford Catholic Worker inc., has a soul. We are each ensouled by God when we are given flesh and we, in turn, ensoul the Mystical Body when we resist all attempts to deprive, diminish or destroy any part of that Body and instead seek always to nourish each other. This Soul is buoyed resurrection. It is evidenced by generosity and more powerful than the split atom. Our collective soul is attracted to goodness, sustained by compassion and yearned for by tiny babies like little Lilly.

Zombies eat brains and leave bodies in the gutter. They destroy communities; it's just what they do. They are the undead; left alone they could exist forever and rule the world.

The Mystical Body of Christ enlarges hearts and resurrects community by building a new world within the shell of the old; it's just what He does. It's what we are called to do.

Which world do you want your kids to inherit?Ω



Meagan Donovan

Back in September when students were asked to write down their initial expectations for their service project, I said that I expected the children to be “loud, rambunctious, some assertive/some shy and initially suspicious but later accepting,” the staff to be “helpful, experienced, insightful, creative and patient,” and the physical environment to be “open, highly active, loud and fast paced.”

With respect to the children, I would say that while some of my early expectations were realized, the majority of them were not. For instance, there certainly were a couple of handfuls of children who had a high degree of energy and were loud and rambunctious, but that was not characteristic of most of the children. On the contrary, many of them were very even-tempered and willing to sit and talk with you or play a game with you.

They might love to run outside to play basketball or ride on the swings, but they also liked to sit and play apples to apples or play with the keyboard. Yet in all my interactions with the children the thing which surprised me the most was their lack of suspicion. While some of them were indeed a little shy, none of them seemed to be outwardly suspicious. In actuality I found most of the children to be quite welcoming. They not only seemed fine with my presence there but they actually seemed to enjoy having me as a “guest.”

My early expectations of the staff were likewise more contradicted than supported. The “staff” at the Hartford Catholic Worker were certainly helpful...and very patient. They went above and beyond to try to provide for the needs of the children and their families – handing

out bread and Thanksgiving Dinner, giving of their time and resources to spend time serving these children, and some even living at the HCW.

However, they were not the super-human caretakers I had imagined they would be. They were



ordinary human beings – some with no prior childcare experience at all – bringing their own unique blends of talents and weaknesses to the table and offering what they could to these children. Some were gifted artistically, some were good at rallying a group of children for a game of basketball, and some were content just to sit in a corner and have a quiet conversation with a child. My experiences with the staff at the HCW

humbled me and reminded me that even ordinary, imperfect people can come together, offer whatever they have and actually make a difference...just by loving others.

I would have to say that my expectations of the physical environment were pretty much confirmed. There was certainly a lot of energy and activity in the Green House most days! And it was certainly fast-paced!

If I had to describe what I learned this semester in terms of the categories listed in *Comway et al (2009)*, I would say my strongest outcomes were social ones. What I am walking away with this semester is a different attitude toward people living in the north end of Hartford in particular, and people living in poverty in general. The biggest changes in my attitude are my beliefs that a) I can make a difference in the lives of people who live in different circumstances than myself, b) that social change and social advocacy are important, and c) that I can and must be a part of that social change.

I entered this service *wanting* to be able to help contribute positively to the lives of people who have strong needs for physiological resources and love/belonging, but I didn't really understand *how* that could be accomplished. Yet, serving at the HCW opened my eyes to what a powerful impact ordinary people can have when they are moved by love to simply give what they have to meet the need they see.

I was able to see the appreciation and happiness on the faces of the children as they were leaving the Green House; I saw how comfortable they felt there...as if it was their second home. I saw how the staff responded to their needs for love and belonging with patience and



*Najae with Kaden*

listen and play games with them and just be with them. I was allowed to be a part of a larger structure of care and support in the HCW. I felt that by participating in the activities of the HCW I was able to support their endeavors to care for their neighbors.

I walk away from this semester with a greater sense of personal impact and, by extension, personal responsibility. Not only can I help

to contribute positively to the life of one person by sharing my physical, spiritual, and relational resources, but I can also join with other people who are interested social change. Together we can share what resources we have to meet the immediate needs of a larger population, and we can also work to *change* those things which perpetuate the cycles of need and injustice in our society.  $\Omega$

*(Meagan is a student at CCSU. She came to the Green House with Jim Conway and his Psychology of Community Service class.)*

kindness. I saw how the children's physical needs for food and shelter were met through the physical building of the Green House and the snacks provided there. And I heard multiple volunteers discussing social advocacy and the need for social reform.

Thinking of this in terms of *Baumeister and Voh's (2002)* needs for meaning, this service has contributed to my sense of efficacy. Both by engaging in my service directly and observing the effect that the staff had on the children and their families, I came to believe that my actions really were important in the larger scheme of things. While I didn't necessarily have a plethora of social resources to offer these children, I was able to smile and



*Sewing Sisters with their new jammie bottoms*

*Some people, when there is talk of progress and the liberation of humanity, like to speak of the arrogance of man without God. Suppose we were to speak a little of man's arrogance with God? It is just as important. It is true that those who remove all tragedy from history, remove all Christianity. But it is only another and equally arrogant way of liquidating Christianity to forget the promise of Easter in the despair of Good Friday.*

**Emmanuel Mounier**

*One does not free a man by detaching him from the bonds that paralyze him; one frees a man by attaching him to his destiny.*

*To desire life at all costs is, some day, to buy life at the price of all reason for living. We have no authentic existence until we have an interior stronghold of values or of devotion against which we do not believe that the fear of death itself could prevail.*

**Emmanuel Mounier**

*Bread for me is a material question. Bread for my neighbor is a spiritual one.*

**Nikolai Berdyaev**

Dennis Petruzzi

On this day last year I attended mass in Haiti which commemorated the first anniversary of the earthquake which took 300,000 lives and changed countless more. The mass was held outside the Cathedral of Our Lady of the Assumption in Port-au-Prince in the shadows of the few walls that survived the earthquake.

My purpose for being in Haiti that day one year after the January 2010 earthquake was not to commemorate the past, but to advance the future of Haiti through the work of the Diocese of Norwich Outreach to Haiti, the non-profit with which my wife Sue and I have been associated since 1996.

When I returned to Connecticut after that trip the question that most people asked me was whether I had seen much change. The question has often been asked of us over the years and more often since the earthquake. It has, in fact, been asked several times since we returned from a visit this past October. The answer almost always is the same.

When you look at the poverty in which the vast majority of people live, the lack of opportunity for education and employment, the scarcity of medical care, the persistence of hunger, preventable disease and premature death you can't possibly report significant change. It doesn't serve anyone, let alone the people of Haiti, to pretend that these deplorable conditions have been eliminated through the hard work and remarkable generosity of individuals and organizations.

But real changes have been made by people and organizations before and since the earthquake. Students have attended now rebuilt schools, medical aid is given to those who would otherwise go without. Sturdy temporary houses have been built

which allow people to return to their neighborhoods. Cash for work, vocational training and cottage industry are new cornerstones to rebuilding and economic development. Each has played a role in creating employment opportunities and a way out of desperate poverty. These changes should not go unreported or be lost in the rubble that



photo by Rev. Robert Hooper

still fills the streets or in the makeshift refugee camps that still house too many people.

Woven into the fabric of these changes are personal stories that have allowed us to put a face and a name to progress. We have known a woman employed by Outreach since before our first trip to Haiti in 1996. When we meet her she never fails to greet us warmly and graciously bears our still halting grasp of her language. Her job has been to wash towels and linens for the

guest house. Washing clothes is on the bottom rung of the employment ladder in Haiti, but it is paid work. As time went on our friend added overtime as the weekend cook. She has always done her best and approached both jobs with dignity and resolve.

Her job has been more than the paycheck for which this illiterate woman must sign with an X to indicate receipt. She is part of the family. Like all other employees she receives health care for herself and her family and tuition scholarships for her children. On our last visit in October, Sue asked about her oldest child. This humble and hardworking woman told us, with pride that could not be hidden, that her daughter was now in medical school. This one result will not be adequately measured in any report of progress made in Haiti. But for the lives that have been touched, including ours, it is change and positive change nonetheless.

Perhaps that is our lesson here. In our culture, we are driven by statistics and results. We measure success and failure sometimes out to three or four decimal places. Too often we are too easily discouraged by the numbers. As Christians we must remind ourselves that the culture that the Gospels should inspire asks only that we react, as the Samaritan did, with kindness and compassion to those whom we come upon on the road. These individual encounters whether in the neighborhoods of Haiti or in Hartford's North End will bring change, however slowly, and will be the true measure of our lives. *Ω (Dennis and his lovely wife Sue are active board members of Hospice St. Joseph, a multi-service provider in Port-au-Prince. Click here to learn more and support their good work.)*





ton. Her most recent offering, a large, dreamy painting of a cloudy beach, is currently hanging in the living room—I've found myself this winter admiring the colors and the pensive quality it gives to the room.

When I think about the Green House on Saturdays, I think of basketball, the ebullient yelps and cries of anguish of the kids, the sound of the ball hitting the rim. Basketball has been especially a focal point this winter because some of our older kids have been tearing it up on the courts of their high schools. Catherine helped Weaver achieve a 17 game winning streak, and Josh, Mookie, and Daylon led Hartford High to an undefeated regular season. We are all extremely proud of their hard work.

But as much as I love cheering on the kids playing basketball, my heart is always drawn upstairs to the art room on Saturdays. There is nothing better than coaxing a reluctant kid into making something beautiful for himself



or a loved one. Usually he's pleasantly surprised with what he has made, and those are special moments for him and for me. It

empowers him to dream, to think in a different way, and to get outside of his own head and the things going on in his life. He begins to see art as a release and as a different way to express himself.

The Saturday before Valentine's Day, the art room was filled with heart stickers, pink and red paper, and doilies. Everyone was sitting around cutting out shapes and making their own unique valentines. Even though the project was done by individuals, it was communal; the kids were laughing and sharing glue and other supplies. I always notice how when the creative juices are flowing, the conversation becomes in turns goofy and fun, intimate, and serious. That Saturday was a beatific vision of the wonderful things community can do for people. It also reminded me how art can express love. It is an attempt by people to reach at and depict the unity we feel around us.

Already I am looking forward to the spring, when Sister Betty's flowers come in and the birds return to song. Spring reminds us that there are so many beautiful things to return to, especially the gift of beauty that God gives us every day in community life. Spring also is a time of changes. In the past few months we have had a guest, "Uncle" Bob, leave, and in May I will be leaving as well to be reunited with my older sister in Philadelphia. This past year and a half has been rich

with new experiences and great people. I will definitely be coming back to visit! If you or anyone you know is interested in exploring community with the HCW, please email us at [doucot@sbcglobal.net](mailto:doucot@sbcglobal.net).

For now, I'll be soaking in the last of rays of community love to take with me when I leave. You can find me in the art room, painting and drawing with the kids. Maybe in the process we'll elevate and expand the world. Ω

## Compline

Phil Metres

*That we await a blessed hope, & that we will be struck  
With great fear, like a baby taken into the night, that every boot,*

*Every improvised explosive, Talon & Hornet, Molotov  
& rubber-coated bullet, every unexploded cluster bomblet,*

*Every Kenlar & suicide vest & unpiloted drone raining fire  
On wedding parties will be burned as fuel in the dark season.*

*That we will learn the awful hunger of God, the nerve-fraying  
Cry of God, the curdy vomit of God, the soiled swaddle of God,*

*The constant wakefulness of God, alongside the sweet scalp  
Of God, the contented murmur of God, the limb-twitched dream-*

*Reaching of God. We're dizzy in every departure, limb-lost.  
We cannot sleep in the wake of God, & God will not sleep*

*The infant dream for long. We lift the blinds, look out into ink  
For light. My God, my God, open the spine binding our sight.  
(Compline originally appeared in Poetry, Phil teaches English at John Carroll University)*

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## Notes From De Porres House

### Kirstie Dodd

I've always been delighted to hear stories about Dorothy Day. Many I've heard from Brian, who, as the unofficial "oral historian" of the Hartford Catholic Worker, seems to retain every bit of information he reads. Based on what he has told me, Dorothy strikes me as a very elegant, refined lady, but not through any calculation on her part. She was simply drawn to beautiful things; she liked collecting beach shells, reading complex novels, and listening avidly to classical music. She frequently quoted Dostoyevsky's famous, "the world will be saved by beauty."

Ade Bethune, whose iconic woodcuts graced the pages of *The Catholic Worker* for years, once expressed anxiety to Dorothy that her drawings weren't "critical" enough of society's shortcomings. "Oh no!" Dorothy responded, "We have too much trouble and bitterness in the world. I want you to do beautiful things, vines and grapes, and mothers and children, and works of mercy, good things."

I think of this response often when I look in the backyard of the Green House. It's hard to miss the many brightly painted murals lining the tops of the fences around the basketball court. They're partly there to serve the utilitarian purpose of preventing a wild ball from soaring into the adjacent yards, and partly because they are beautiful. Each one has a message; there is a quotation from Isaiah and the prayer of St. Francis and an excerpt from Langston Hughes' poetry. One

created by the kids says "Hater-Free Zone" and another says "Help Increase the Peace." I imagine Dorothy coming to the house and smiling at the sight of the murals—they depict all of the "good things" she directed Ade Bethune to draw. There are trees, vines, peace



doves with olive branches, suns, lakes and mountains, saints, smiling kids, and all sorts of animals. The murals themselves provide a visual history of the worker. In various stages of aging, some of them have been there for so long that they appear as though they've grown into the fence. The new ones are put up right next to the old ones; this regenerative cycle is mirrored in the way the older kids help nurture the young ones in the ways of the Green House community.

The murals remind me how important the role of art is in life! At the Catholic Worker we are often times focusing so intently on the basic needs of the kids and the community

around us that we forget to "stop and smell the roses." It's especially hard during the long winter when the world is dormant and everything outside is painted in dreary greys.

But art doesn't just lift us up out of the mundane—it also provides opportunities for communities to come together.

This winter we all had the pleasure of attending Jackie and Dwight's (first ever!) art exhibit at the Charter Oak Cultural Center. Entitled "Black and White in Color," the exhibit displayed a lot of the work that they had done over the years in their soft pastel class. It was amazing to see all of the people who showed up for the premiere of the exhibit; people from all over Connecticut, old friends of the community, some of the kids, and many of the mainstay volunteers of the Green House. People came to support and affirm the talents of two of our beloved community members, and in

exchange they were nourished by the beauty that Jackie and Dwight could provide. What a bright splash of color in the middle of a long winter!

Dwight himself is an artistic marvel. He's been taking art classes at Manchester Community College, and anyone that's seen his most recent work in oils would agree that the man knows how to *paint*. Brian is our Fritz Eichenberg; he can sit down and produce some of the most beautiful ink drawings I've ever seen in the course of an afternoon. And Jackie posts a painting of hers on Facebook and soon half the world has hit the "like" but

**(Please see: Notes, p9)**